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(54) **PROGRAMMING SYSTEM FOR INTERACTIVE NUMERICAL CONTROL DEVICE.**

(57) A system for producing NC programs for interactive numerical control devices. The operator defines forms of raw materials and parts (S1, S2) and specifies whether the secondary operations are included in a production process (S3) or not. The definitions of cut regions of primary working are performed in just the same manner as with an ordinal double spindle lathe and the forms of the raw

materials and the parts are drawn reversely in the secondary working (S6) to define the cut regions of the secondary working in images similar to the ones of the primary working (S7). On the basis of such definitions of the necessary working conditions, the interactive numerical control device outputs NC data for the secondary working and for the primary working (S8) separately.

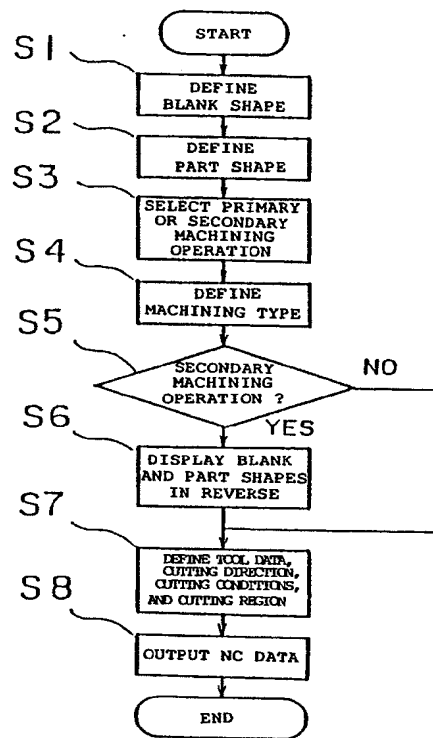


Fig. 1

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a method of programming an interactive numerical control apparatus, and more particularly to a method of programming an interactive numerical control apparatus for simultaneous generation of numerical control (NC) data for primary and secondary machining operations.

Background Art

When interactive numerical control apparatus are to be programmed, the operator inputs numerical data in answer to questions as to necessary items according to a procedure, or selects a desired item from a displayed menu. Such an interactive programming method is widely used to generate machining programs for various numerically controlled machine tools because it allows even novice operators to generate the programs by using data from drawing figures and other sources.

Some interactive numerical control apparatus employ symbolic keys for entering shape elements to input blank and part shapes. Specifically, the shape of a part is inputted using horizontal lines, vertical lines, oblique lines, and arcs to generate a machining program. The use of such symbolic keys allows part shapes to be inputted easily for efficient generation of NC programs.

Computerized, numerically controlled lathes with a plurality of machining heads for higher machining efficiency include a two-spindle, two-turret four-axis lathe having two parallel spindles. Usually, a workpiece is machined by the two-spindle, two-turret four-axis lathe such that one end of the workpiece, which is held by one of the heads, is machined in a primary machining operation, and thereafter the workpiece is held by the other head and its opposite end is machined in a secondary machining operation (which may also be referred to as a backward machining operation).

FIG. 11 of the accompanying drawings schematically shows the manner in which a workpiece is machined by a two-spindle, two-turret four-axis lathe. First, a workpiece 42a held by a chuck 41a is machined to a desired shape by a tool 44a mounted on a turret 43a in a primary machining operation. Then, the machined workpiece 42a is released from the chuck 41a and held, as a workpiece 42b, by another chuck 41b. The workpiece 42b held by the chuck 41b is machined to a desired shape by a tool 44b mounted on a turret 43b in a secondary machining operation.

According to the conventional method of programming interactive numerical control apparatus, NC data for a primary machining operation and NC data for a secondary machining operation are gen-

erated separately from each other. Therefore, the interactive numerical control apparatus must be programmed separately on the NC data for the primary and secondary machining operation even if one final part shape is to be achieved. Such a programming process has been inefficient to carry out.

Disclosure of the Invention

In view of the aforesaid drawbacks of the conventional method of programming interactive numerical control apparatus, it is an object of the present invention to provide a method of programming an interactive numerical control apparatus by defining a final part shape and producing NC data automatically separately for respective primary and secondary machining operations.

To achieve the above object, there is provided in accordance with the present invention a method of programming an interactive numerical control apparatus by inputting data through keys, which correspond to a machined shape, on a control panel, and answering questions displayed on a display screen, to generate a numerical control program, the method comprising the steps of defining a blank shape and a part shape, indicating a primary machining operation or a secondary machining operation for a machining type to be defined, defining a cutting region for the indicated primary or secondary machining operation, and outputting numerical control data separately for the respective primary and secondary machining operations, based on the defined part shape, the defined machining type, and the defined cutting region.

The operator first defines the blank and part shapes, and indicates primary and secondary machining operations for a selected machining type, or only a primary machining operation with no secondary machining operation. If there is a secondary machining operation selected, a cutting region for the primary machining operation is defined in the same manner as with an ordinary two-axis lathe. For the secondary machining operation, the blank and part shapes are displayed in reverse, and a cutting region for the secondary machining operation is defined in the same manner as the cutting region for the primary machining operation is defined. Based on the necessary data and machining conditions that are defined, the interactive numerical control apparatus outputs numerical control data separately for the respective primary and secondary machining operations.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a flowchart of a programming method

according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a hardware arrangement of a numerical control apparatus to which the present invention is applied;

FIG. 3 is a view showing a display screen of an interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a blank shape and a part shape;

FIG. 4 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying soft keys for selecting primary and secondary machining operations;

FIG. 5 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying soft keys for selecting machining types;

FIG. 6 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying tool data;

FIG. 7 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a cutting direction;

FIG. 8 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying cutting conditions;

FIG. 9 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a cutting region;

FIG. 10 is a view showing a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a cutting region in a secondary machining operation; and

FIG. 11 is a schematic view illustrative of a two-spindle, two-turret four-axis lathe.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

An embodiment of the present invention will hereinafter be described with reference to the drawings.

FIG. 2 schematically shows a hardware arrangement of a numerical control apparatus to which the present invention is applied. The numerical control apparatus includes a processor 11 for controlling the numerical control apparatus in its entirety according to a system program that is stored in a ROM 12. The ROM 12 may comprise an EPROM or an EEPROM. The numerical control apparatus also includes a RAM 13 such as an SRAM for storing various data and input/output signals, and a nonvolatile memory 14 such as a CMOS backed up by a battery, for storing parameters, pitch error compensation values, and tool compensation values that should remain stored after the power supply of the numerical control apparatus is turned off.

A graphic control circuit 15 converts a digital signal into a display signal, and applies the display

signal to a display unit 16. The display unit 16, which may comprise a CRT or a liquid crystal display unit, displays axis positions, input/output signal statuses, parameters, etc. A control panel 17 such as a keyboard or the like is used to input various data or control a machine tool 19.

A PMC (Programmable Machine Controller) 18 receives an output signal over a bus 20, and processes the output signal according to a sequence program to control the machine tool 19. The PMC 18 also receives an input signal from the machine tool 19, processes the input signal according to the sequence program, and transfers the processed signal to the processor 11 over the bus 20.

The above components of the numerical control apparatus are interconnected by the bus 20.

Various other components including servoamplifiers, servomotors, spindle amplifiers, and spindle motors are omitted from illustration in FIG. 2. Instead of the single processor 11, a plurality of processors may be employed as a multiprocessor system.

FIG. 3 illustrates a display screen of an interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a blank shape and a part shape. The display screen, indicated by 31, displays a blank shape 32 represented by the dotted lines and a part shape 33 represented by the solid lines. The blank shape 32 and the part shape 33 are entered and defined by the operator, either using symbolic keys on the control panel 17 or in answer to questions displayed on the display screen. When the blank shape 32 and the part shape 33 are to be defined, it is not necessary for the operator to be concerned with the primary and secondary machining operations, but to define a final part shape. After the data of the blank shape 32 and the part shape 32 have been entered, the operator presses a soft key 34 for a next page to go to a next display screen.

FIG. 4 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying soft keys for selecting primary and secondary machining operations. The display screen, indicated by 35, displays soft keys 36, 37 for selecting primary and secondary machining operations to define a machining type. To select the primary machining operation, the operator presses the soft key 36 for the primary machining operation. To select the secondary machining operation, the operator presses the soft key 37 for the secondary machining operation. When the soft key 37 for the secondary machining operation is pressed, the message "SECONDARY MACHINING" should preferably be displayed for the convenience of the operator in the subsequent control process.

FIG. 5 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen

displaying soft keys for selecting machining types. A desired machining type can be selected and defined by one of soft keys displayed on the display screen, indicated by 46. In FIG. 5, a rough profile machining type is selected by a soft key 47.

FIG. 6 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying tool data. The operator inputs tool data in answer to questions displayed on the display screen, indicated by 49. Depending on the selected machining type, registered tool data are automatically displayed when the operator inputs a tool identification number.

FIG. 7 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a cutting direction. A cutting direction is inputted by the operator using ten numeric keys on the control panel 17 or soft keys displayed on the display screen, indicated by 51. In FIG. 7, a downward cutting direction is selected by a soft key 52 with a downward arrow on the display screen 51.

FIG. 8 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying cutting conditions. Cutting conditions of a machining step are displayed on the display screen, indicated by 54. The displayed cutting conditions may be corrected as necessary.

FIG. 9 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a cutting region. The display screen, indicated by 56, displays a blank shape represented by the dotted lines and a machined shape (part shape) represented by the solid line. In answer to a displayed question as to a direction of division, the operator moves two blinking cursors (not shown) on the display screen to indicate machining starting and ending positions on the displayed machined part. A hatched region 57 is indicated by the cursors, and will be cut off in a rough profile machining process, which is a primary machining operation.

FIG. 10 shows a display screen of the interactive numerical control apparatus, the display screen displaying a cutting region in a secondary machining operation. The display screen, indicated by 59, also displays a blank shape and a part shape, but differs from the display screen 56 shown in FIG. 9 in that the blank and part shapes are displayed in reverse to facilitate the definition of a cutting region in a secondary machining operation. A cutting region in a secondary machining operation is displayed upon selection of the secondary machining operation in the definition of a machining type as shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 1 is a flowchart of a programming method according to the present invention. The numerals following the letter "S" below indicate step numbers.

[S1] A blank shape is defined.

[S2] A final part shape is defined (see FIG. 3).

[S3] A primary machining operation or a secondary machining operation is selected (see FIG. 4).

[S4] A machining type is defined. In the illustrated embodiment, a rough profile machining process is selected (see FIG. 5).

[S5] This step determines whether a primary machining operation or a secondary machining operation has been selected. If the secondary machining operation has been selected, then control goes to a step S6, and if the primary machining operation has been selected, then control jumps to a step S7. The step S5 is automatically carried out in the programming apparatus based on the selection made in the step S3.

[S6] If the secondary machining operation is indicated, the blank and part shapes are displayed in reverse. The step S6 is also automatically carried out in the programming apparatus.

[S7] Tool data, a cutting direction, cutting conditions (see FIGS. 6 through 8), and a cutting region are defined. If the primary machining operation has been selected, then a cutting region is defined along a machined shape as shown in FIG. 9. If the secondary machining operation has been selected, then a cutting region is defined on the display screen as shown in FIG. 10, in which the blank and part shapes are displayed in reverse, in the same manner as when the primary machining operation has been selected.

[S8] First, NC data are outputted for the primary machining operation, and then NC data are outputted for the secondary machining operation.

While the method of programming an interactive numerical control apparatus has been described in the above embodiment, the present invention is also applicable to a programming method for an automatic programming apparatus.

With the present invention, as described above, a part shape is defined, a primary machining region and then a secondary machining region are defined, and NC data are outputted separately for respective primary and secondary machining operations. The method of the present invention makes a programming process much more efficient than would if an interactive numerical control apparatus were programmed separately on the NC data for the primary and secondary machining operations regardless of one final part shape to be achieved.

Claims

1. A method of programming an interactive numerical control apparatus by inputting data

through keys, which correspond to a machined shape, on a control panel, and answering questions displayed on a display screen, to generate a numerical control program, said method comprising the steps of:

5

defining a blank shape and a part shape;

indicating a primary machining operation of a secondary machining operation for a machining type to be defined;

defining a cutting region for the indication primary or secondary machining operation; and

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outputting numerical control data separately for the respective primary and secondary machining operations, based on the defined part shape, the defined machining type, and the defined cutting region.

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2. A method according to claim 1, further including the step of:

displaying the blank shape and the part shape in reverse and defining a cutting region for the secondary machining operation if the secondary machining operation is indicated.

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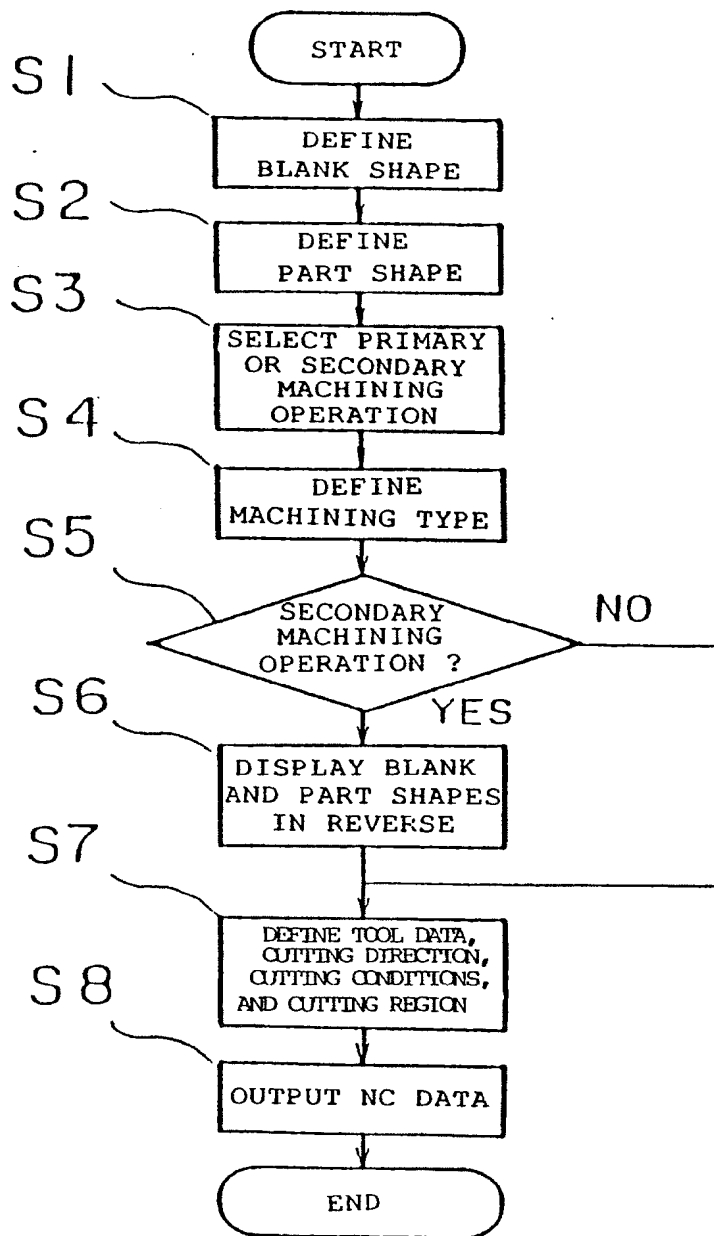
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F i g . 1

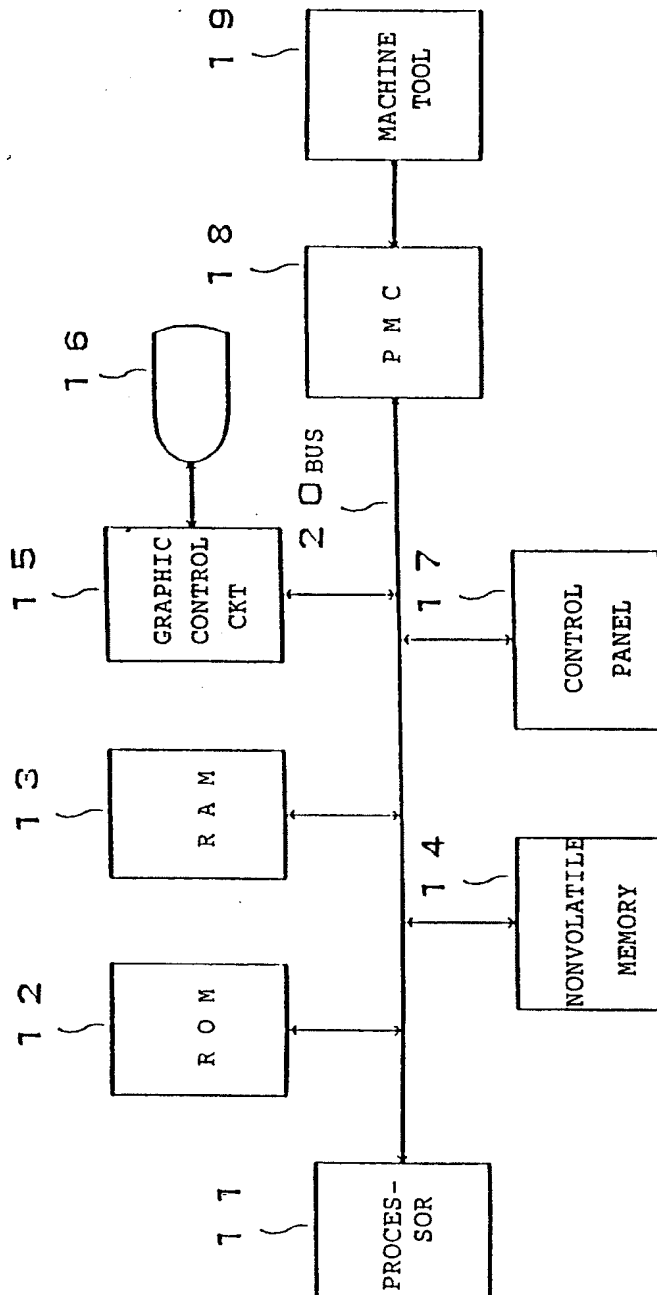
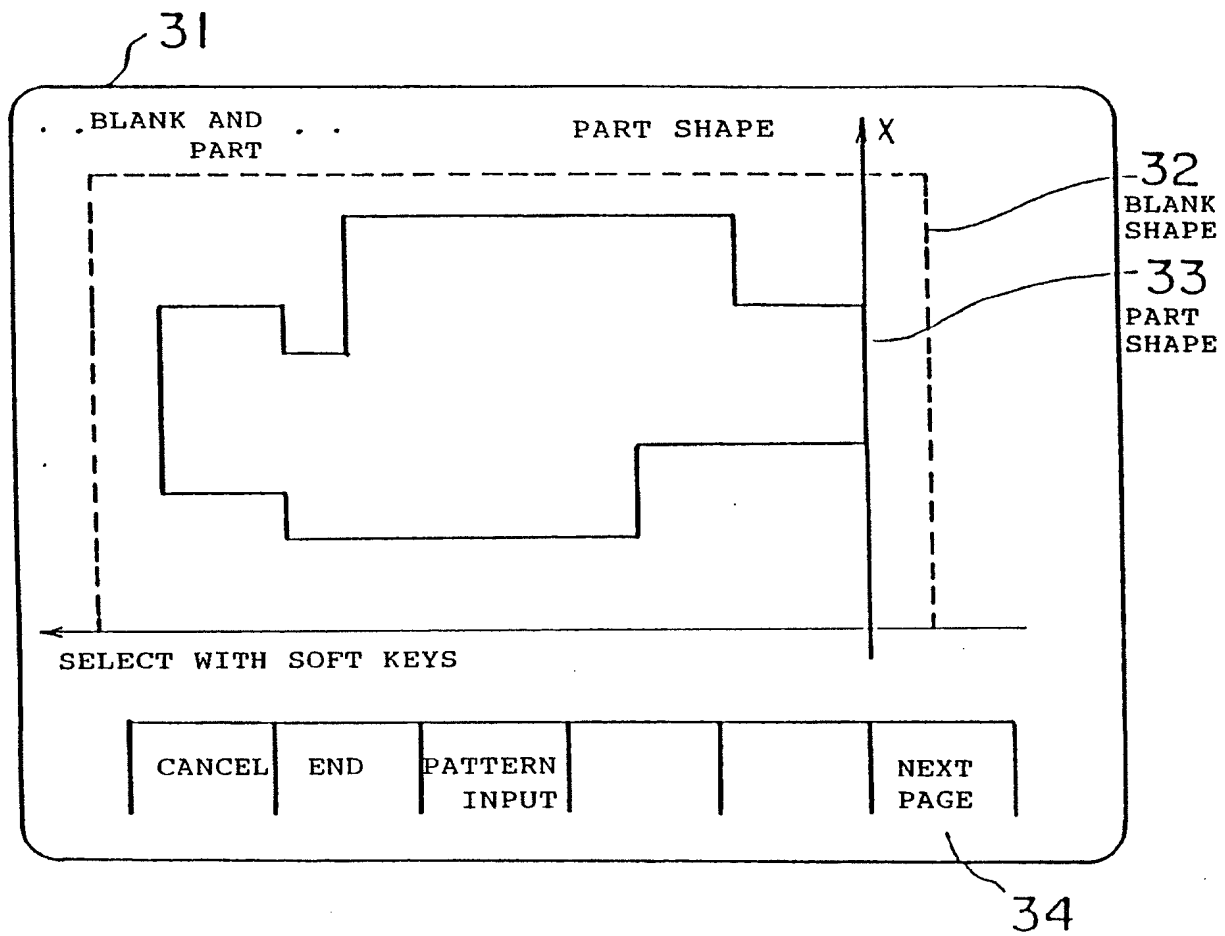
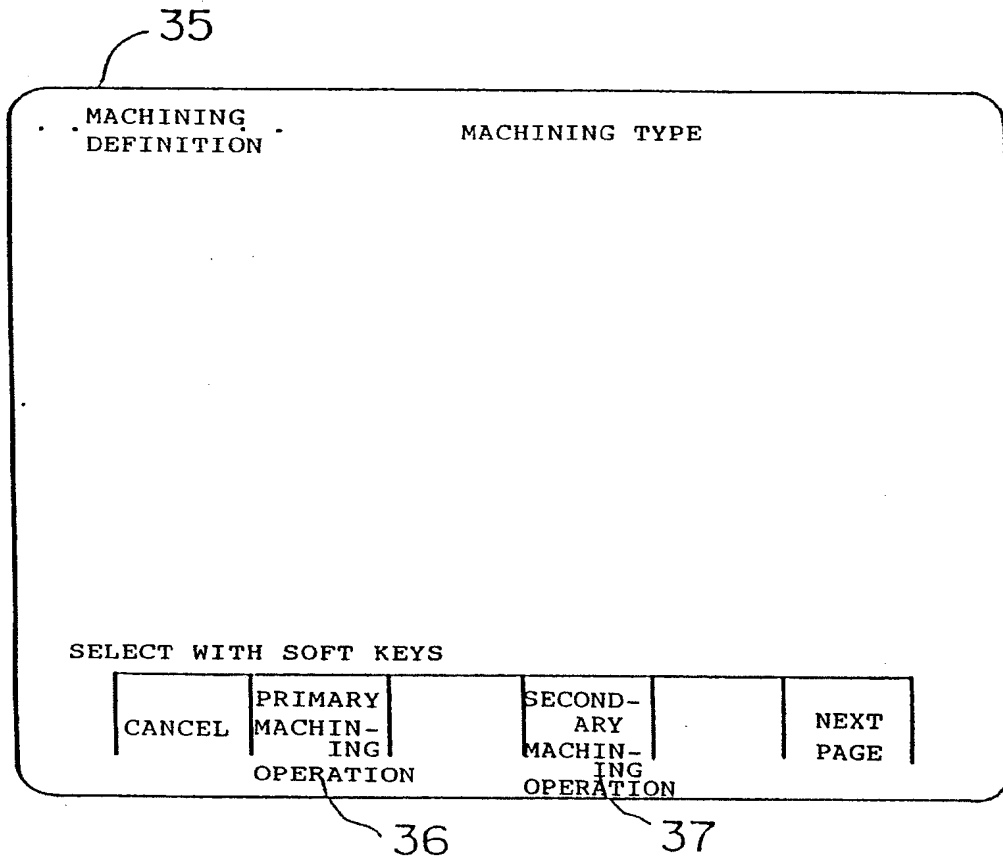


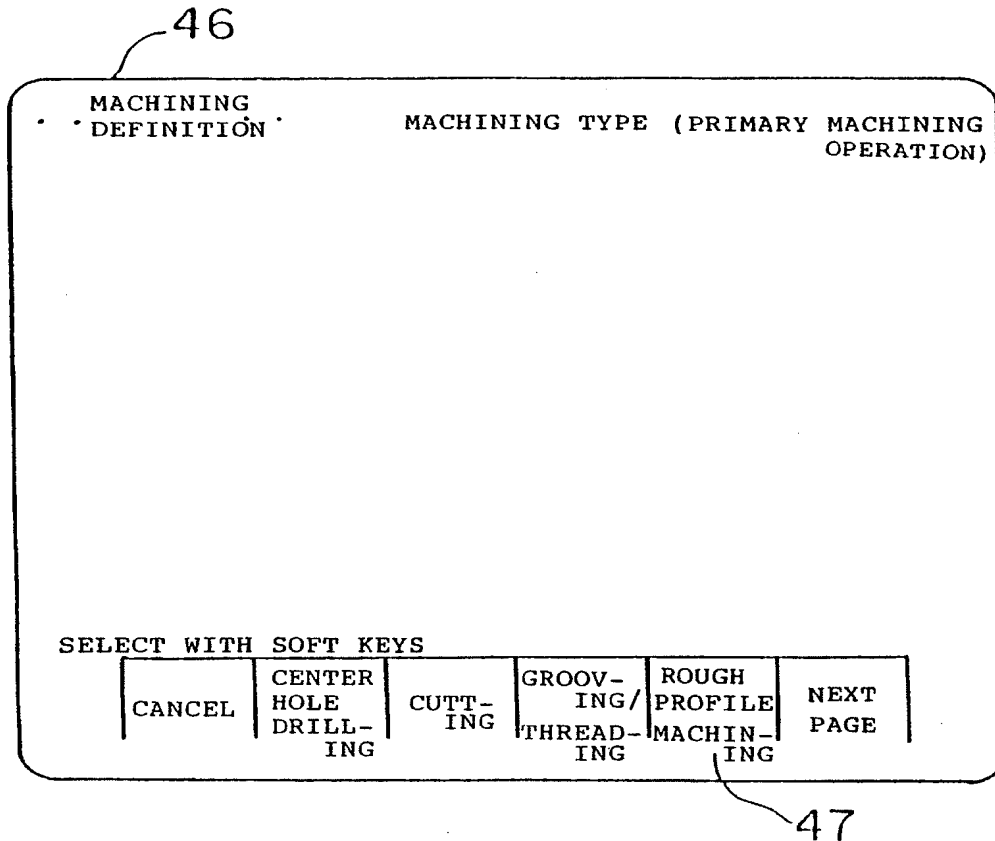
Fig. 2



F i g . 3



F i g . 4



F i g . 5

49

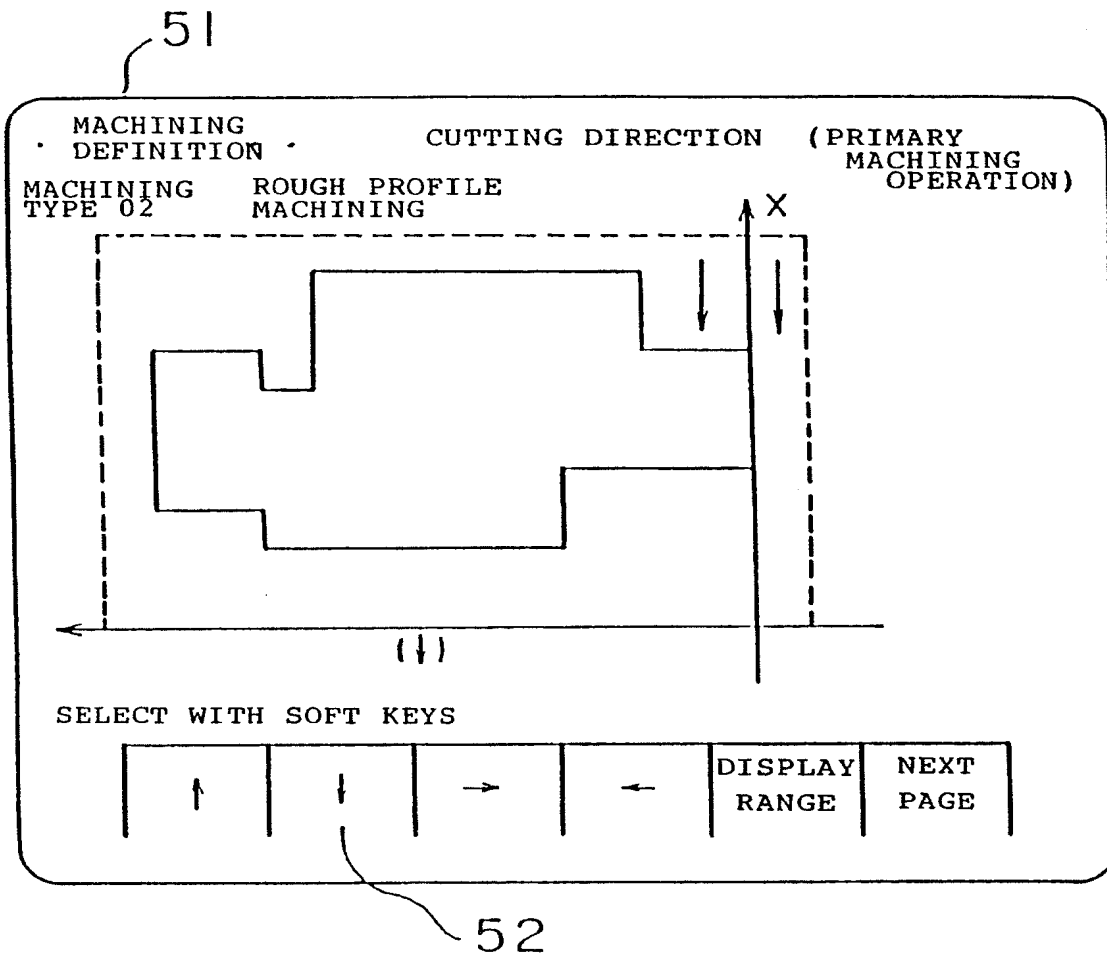
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TOOL NUMBER	· · · · TN =	3			
TOOL POSITION COM- PENSATION NO.	· · · TM =	3			
TURRET NO.	· · · TL =	1			
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SELECT WITH SOFT KEYS

CANCEL	PREVIOUS PAGE	NEXT TOOL	CHECK		NEXT PAGE
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F i g . 6

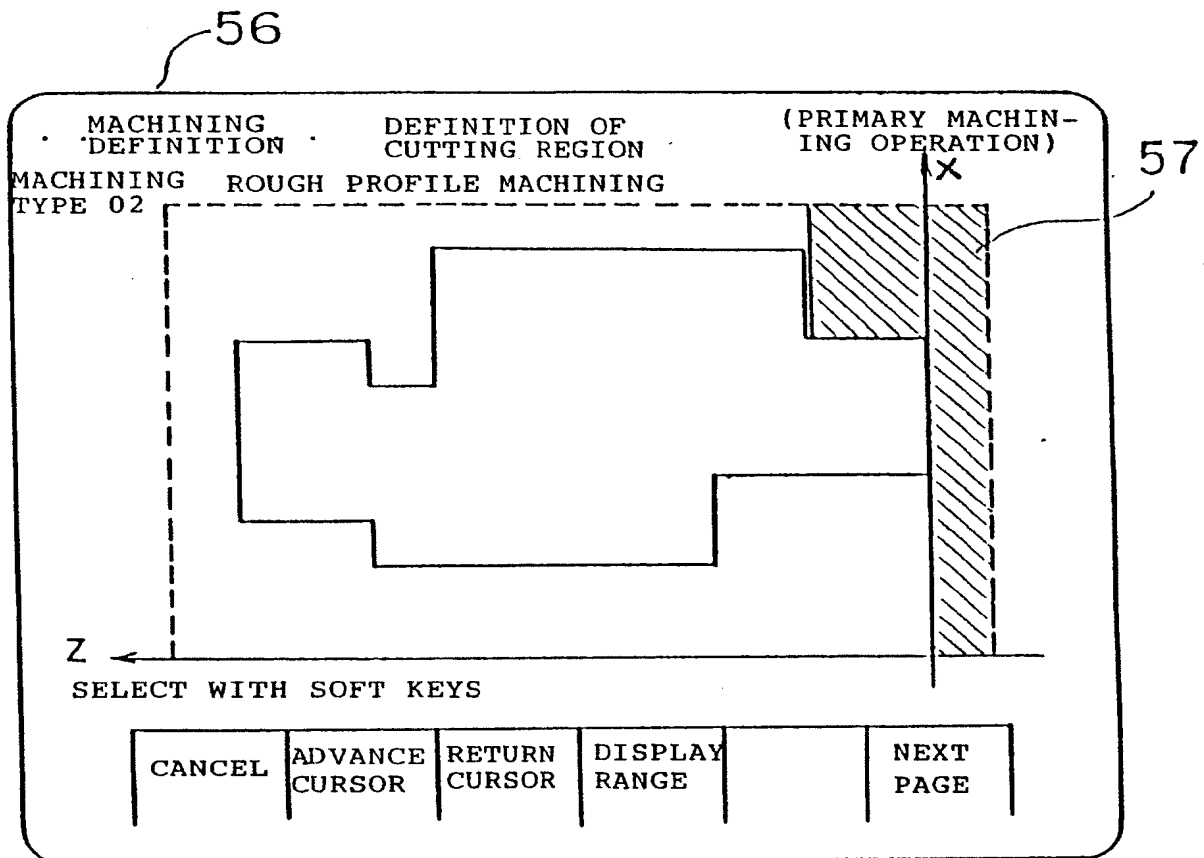


F i g . 7

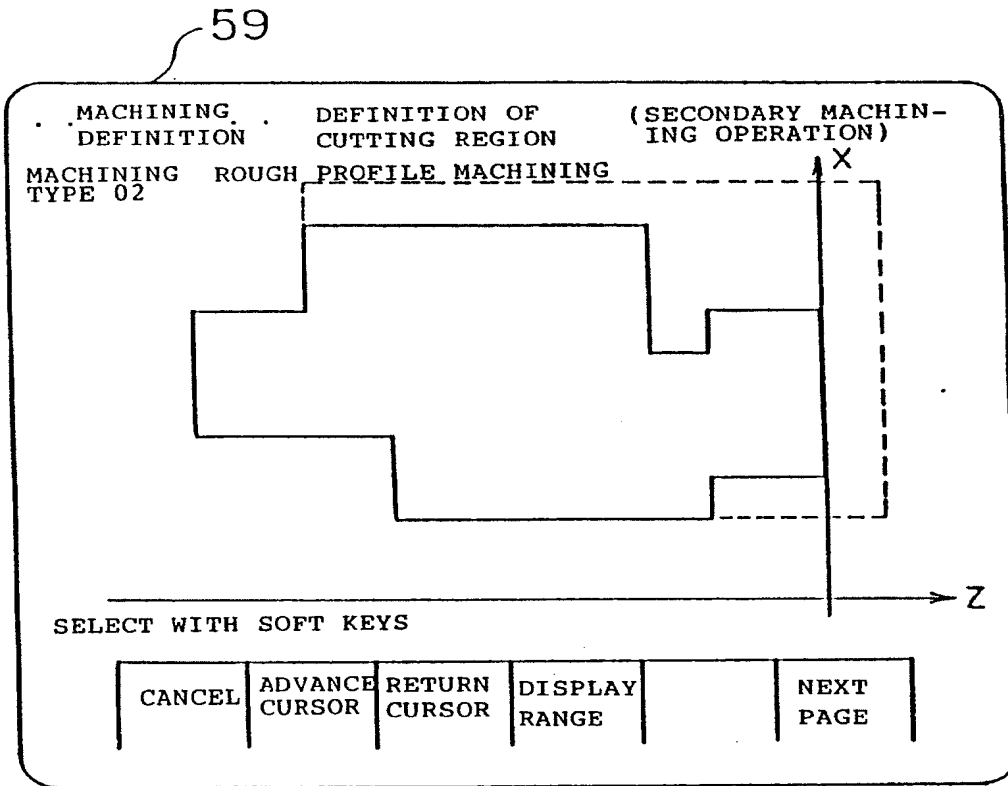
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MACHINING DEFINITION		CUTTING CONDITIONS		(PRIMARY MACHINING OPERATION)	
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FINISHING ALLOWANCE T X =					
CUTTING DEPTH . . . D =					
CUTTING SPEED . . . V =					
FEEDING SPEED . . . F I =					
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SELECT WITH SOFT KEYS					
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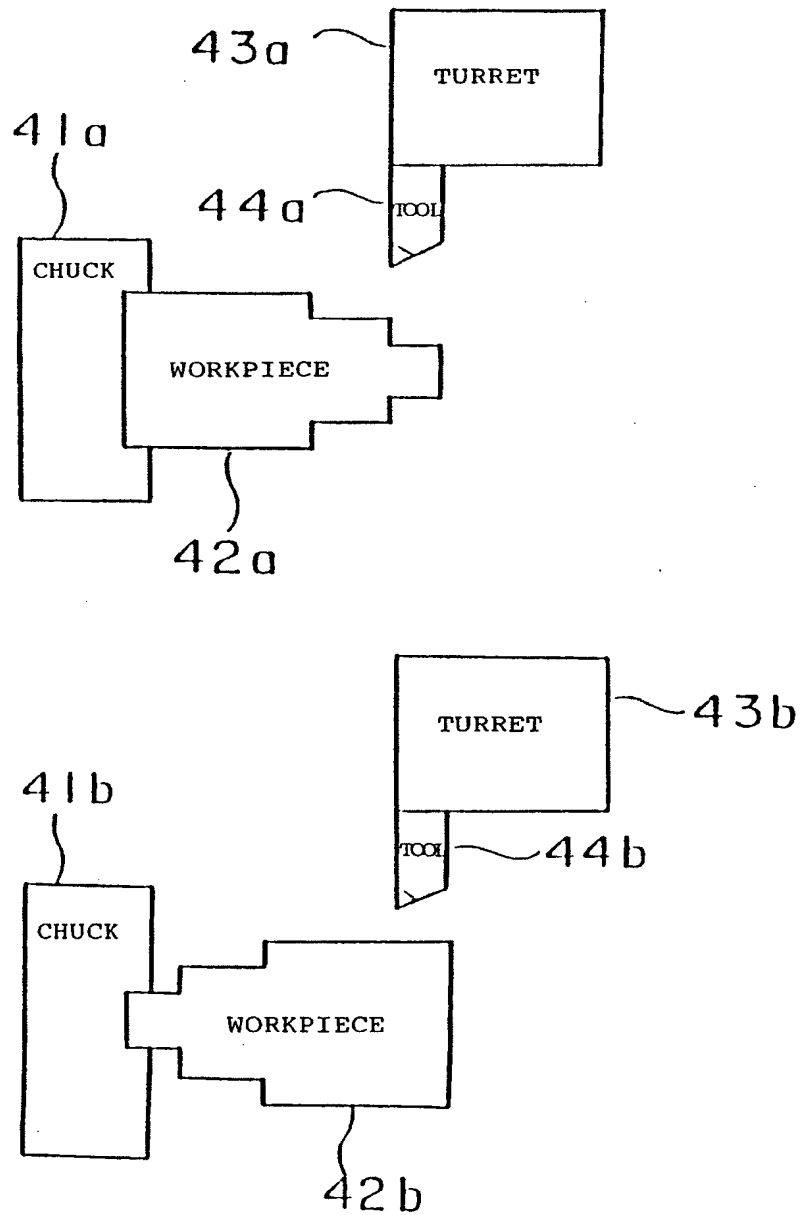
F i g . 8



F i g . 9



F i g . 1 0



F i g . 1 1

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/JP91/00328

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC		
Int. Cl ⁵ G05B19/403, G05B19/405, G05B19/18		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
IPC	G05B19/403, G05B19/405, G05B19/18	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸		
Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1926 - 1991	
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1971 - 1991	
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹		
Category ¹⁰	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
X	JP, A, 2-62603 (Yamazaki Mazak Corp.), March 2, 1990 (02. 03. 90), Line 16, lower left column, page 5 to line 14, upper right column, page 6, line 3, upper left column to line 1, upper right column, page 9 (Family: none)	1, 2
<p>¹⁰ Special categories of cited documents.</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"Z" document member of the same patent family</p>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
June 5, 1991 (05. 06. 91)	June 17, 1991 (17. 06. 91)	
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer	
Japanese Patent Office		

Form PCT/ISA:210 (second sheet) (January 1985)